

Message Text

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PAGE 01 TEL AV 03416 150747Z
ACTION AID-59

INFO OCT-01 NEA-10 ISO-00 SSM-03 EB-08 TRSE-00 COME-00
AGRE-00 INT-05 CIAE-00 DODE-00 /086 W
-----115089 151257Z /46
R 141020Z MAR 78
FM AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1905
INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN

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E. O. 11652: NA
TAGS: ENRG IS
SUBJ: MEDITERRANEAN-DEAD SEA CANAL

REF.: (A) TEL AVIV 2833, (B) STATE 60821

1. SUMMARY: EARLIEST DATE FOR A DECISION BY GOI
ON WHETHER OR NOT TO PROCEED WITH THE SUBJECT CANAL
IS 1979 OR 1980. THERE WILL PROBABLY BE NO "PRE-
FEASIBILITY" APPRAISAL SINCE SOME WORK HAS ALREADY
BEEN DONE WHICH FALLS IN THAT CATEGORY, E.G. INVESTIGATIONS
OF GEOLOGY OR SOME OF THE PROPOSED ROUTES FOR THE CANAL.
END SUMMARY

2. IN MARCH 1974, ISRAELI MINCOMMERCE FORMED A COMMITTEE
OF SEVEN TECHNICALLY QUALIFIED PERSONS FROM GOVERNMENT,
ACADEMIA AND INDUSTRY UNDER THE CHAIRMANSHIP OF PROF
S ECKSTEIN OF BAR ILAN UNIVERSITY TO INVESTIGATE THE
FEASIBILITY OF THE CANAL. THE COMMITTEE ISSUED AN
INTERIM REPORT IN JULY 1975 AND CONTINUED WITH ITS
WORK. ACCORDING TO MR I ADAR, A MEMBER OF THE
ECKSTEIN COMMITTEE, THE GROUP MAY ISSUE ANOTHER REPORT
IN A FEW MONTHS RECOMMENDING FURTHER EXTENSIVE TECHNICAL
STUDIES.

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3. AT THE BEGINNING OF 1978 A SECOND COMMITTEE, HEADED
BY PROF YUVAL NE'EMAN OF TEL AVIV UNIVERSITY, WAS
FORMED BY THE MINFINANCE TO INVESTIGATE OTHER ASPECTS
OF THE PROPOSED CANAL, SUCH AS ITS POLITICAL AND INTER-
NATIONAL CONSEQUENCES. SOME MEMBERS OF THE ECKSTEIN
COMMITTEE (INCLUDING MR ADAR) ARE MEMBERS OF THE LARGER

NEEMAN COMMITTEE.

4. THERE IS NO DEADLINE FOR THE COMPLETION OF THE WORK OF EITHER COMMITTEE.

5. A LOCAL PAPER, HAARETZ, REPORTED ON MARCH 7 THAT THE GOVERNMENT-OWNED WATER COMPANY TAHAL BELIEVES THAT THE PROJECT WOULD BE WORTHWHILE IF CRUDE OIL WERE TO RISE TO \$120 PER TON. A TAHAL SURVEY REPORTEDLY INDICATED THAT THERE ARE FOUR ROUTES BEING CONSIDERED FOR THE CANAL. IN ORDER OF DESIRABILITY, THEY ARE (A) NITZANIM TO EIN FAZHA, (B) ZEBOULUN VALLEY TO BEIT SHEAN TO JORDAN RIVER TO DEAD SEA, (C) ZIKIM TO MASSADA AND (D) DIR-EL-BALACH VIA THE NEGEV TO MASSADA. THE COST OF THE FIRST TWO ALTERNATIVES IS ESTIMATED AT ABOUT \$500 MILLION AND \$400 MILLION RESPECTIVELY. VIETS

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Message Attributes

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